

Clergy Mentoring

# Thinking about being mentored?

### Why mentoring?

Many clergy are excited about the opportunities for mission and ministry the Church has at this time. They can also be somewhat daunted by the increasing expectations on clergy, and some feel isolated in their role. Mentoring is one way of providing a supportive and encouraging environment in which clergy can grow and develop. The aim of the scheme is that clergy, particularly at times of transition (for example, first time incumbents, or those moving from one role to another), who would like a mentor will be provided with one.

### What is Christian mentoring?

With so much written on this subject, and some of it contradictory, it helps to be clear what the Diocese mean by mentoring. Drawing on work done by CPAS, we are defining it as ‘a dynamic, intentional, voluntary relationship of trust in which one person (the mentor) enables another person (the mentee) to maximise the grace of God within their lives and develop their potential in the service of God’s kingdom purposes’. It is different to other helping roles, such as counselling, spiritual direction, or work consultancy.

### What can I expect as a mentee?

You will be offered a potential mentor by the co-ordinator of the mentoring scheme. The mentor has been through a simple training process within the Diocese, and is offered support in their role as a mentor.

The first meeting will be an informal chat where you can get to know one another, share something of why you are looking for a mentor, and work out whether to proceed. It is absolutely fine if either the mentee or mentor at this stage decides not to proceed. Sometimes it is clear from the start that either the mentor doesn’t have the right experience for a particular mentee, or the chemistry just doesn’t work well between the mentor and mentee.

If you both think it might work, then you will chat through a variety of things to ensure the relationship has clear and agreed expectations:

* **Frequency and length of meetings**. Normally people meet every four to six weeks for anything between 60-120 minutes. Both frequency and length of meetings are agreed following the initial meeting.
* **Meeting place**. Normally the mentee travels to a mutually agreed place near the mentor’s home. Mentoring can take place in a home, a coffee shop, a church room, even on a walk.
* **Focus of conversation**. It helps to agree where the focus of the conversation lies, and where are the boundaries (things you don’t want to talk about). The agenda for the conversation is primarily driven by the mentee.

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* **Contact between meetings**. Most mentoring relationships have minimal contact between sessions.
* **Reviewing how things are going**. It helps to agree a timescale after which you will review how things are going, perhaps initially after three or four sessions, so adjustments can be made.
* **Number of sessions**. Normally it helps to commit to six sessions at the initial stage. Most mentoring relationships last somewhere between 12-18 months, although they can be shorter or longer. If the relationship is to last longer than c18 months it is worth re negotiating the basis of the future relationship.
* **Confidentiality**. This is a confidential relationship (within the boundaries of the law) and the content of the sessions will not be reported back to the Diocese in anyway.
* **Payment**. Mentoring is provided free of charge within the Diocese. The mentee is responsible for any travelling expenses which should be treated as a parish expense.

### What do you need to bring to the relationship?

The great thing about mentoring is that the primary thing you need to bring is yourself! It isn’t a training course with lots of reading. It isn’t a sermon where you sit and listen. It is a relationship focused on your development. So bring humility, openness, and a commitment to make it work, for example, thinking about what you want to talk through ahead of the meeting, acting on steps agreed with your mentor after the meeting.

### For further information

Please contact the Diocesan Mentor Scheme co-ordinator, Revd Jane Chamberlain, Training Team Leader, (jane.chamberlain@bathwells.anglican.org).

This handout was prepared in partnership with CPAS, who are acting as facilitators to our diocesan mentor scheme.

April 2017